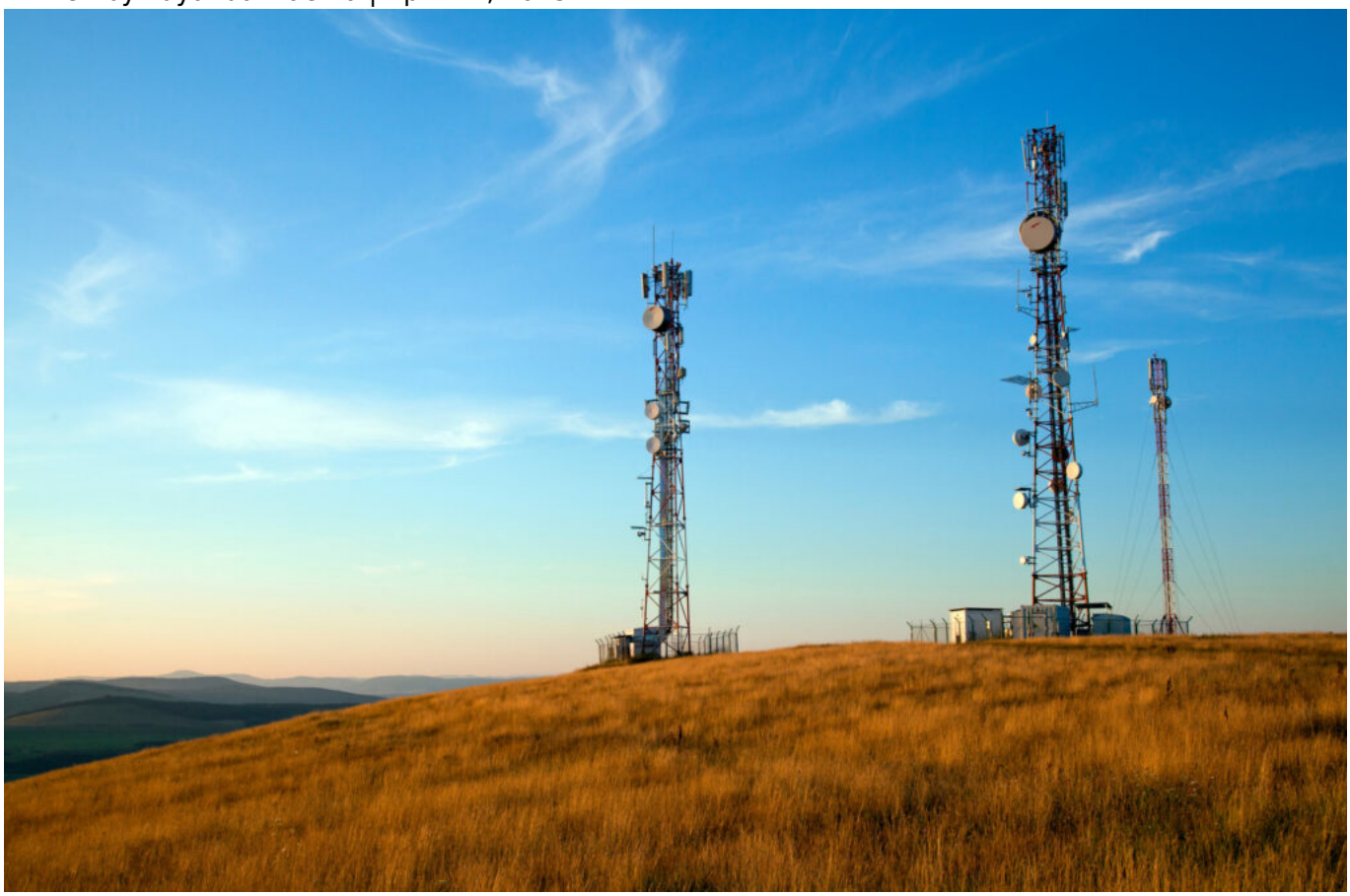
UNLOCKING TYPE APPROVAL: ENSURING COMPLIANCE AND NAVIGATING FEE CHANGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Category: Infrastructure and Telecommunications,IT Law,Technology Law
written by Luyanda Maema | April 12, 2025



In the evolving world of telecommunications, the use of electronic communications equipment or facilities must be first be approved by Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA).[1] Type Approval plays a crucial role in ensuring that equipment meets safety, performance and regulatory requirements, before it can be used or sold in South Africa.

ICASA recently issued a notice[2] regarding an increase to fees associated with Services Licences in line with regulation (3)(2)(b) of the General Licence Fees Regulations.[3] As an example, the fee for Provisional Type Approval will increase from R3,125.00 to R3,262.00 and Radio Equipment will increase from R6,251.00 to R6,526.00 as of 1 April 2025.

Before considering how this will affect your budget, let's first explain what Type Approval is and how it works.

What is type approval and who needs it?

Type Approval is a process regulated by ICASA, where equipment is tested to ensure that it meets all regulatory and international standards. These standards are aimed at:

1. protecting the integrity of the electronic communications network;

2. ensuring proper functioning of the connected equipment and facilities;

3. ensuring interoperability, interconnectability and harmonisation; and

4. avoiding harmful interference with the electronic communication network.[4]

ICASA publishes these standards in the Government Gazette.

Applications for Type Approval can be made by manufacturers, importers, distributors, and any South African registered company. It is important to note that non-type approved equipment will not be allowed to be used in South Africa.

Types of Type of Approval

There are two types of Type Approval:

1. Standard Type Approval: this requires applicants to submit a test report, proof of payment, photographs, functional descriptions, schematic diagrams, and print circuit board layouts (PCB). If your application is successful, you will receive a Type Approval Certificate.

2. Simplified Type Approval: this application is for equipment that is already on the Type Approval register. This process does not need test reports but may require a representative sample.

Licence duration

Type Approvals remain valid for an unlimited period, as long as the approved equipment has not been changed, and the technical standards have not changed in a way that will render the equipment unapproved. Thus, if any cosmetic changes are made to the equipment, but the technical standards remain the same, then a new application for type approval is not needed.

Fees

As aforementioned, ICASA will implement new fees for Type Approval and other administrative fees effective from 1 April 2025. The increase will be by 4.4% based on the average Consumer Price Index (CPI). You can view Schedule 1 of the notice for all other fees relating to Service Licences. Consider checking out our article discussing the different types of service licences for further information on this.

How can we assist?

We can provide advice on your application for Type Approval and help you understand the standards which would be applicable. Further we can advise on the possession, use, supply, sale, offer of sale or lease or hire of any type of electronic communications equipment or electronic communications facility.

For more good, clear, precise advice, don’t hesitate to contact us.